

# MEETING NOTES | April 12, 2012

## Santa Rosa Plain Basin Advisory Panel

### Meeting in Brief

The panel discussed goals for groundwater management, boundary designation and optional legal frameworks for the Groundwater Management Plan (GMP). The panel agreed to the watershed boundary for the GMP. There was extensive discussion on perceived pros, cons and concerns associated with the adoption of the AB 3030 model. The panel did not make a final decision on the legal framework for the GMP. Rather, a subcommittee or small working group may be formed to further explore the issue.

### Action Items

Name	Action Item
Gina Bartlett	Copy of raw goals and objectives exercise notes
Marcus Trotta	Distribute copy of Rebecca Nelson report to panel
Walt, Dawna, Rue, Mark, Lloyd	Form legal framework subcommittee

### Next Meeting: June 7, 9:00 – 12:00, at Laguna Treatment Facility

- Modeling Scenarios
- Legal Framework Subcommittee Report Back and Decision Making
- Mission, Goals and Objectives – Straw Proposal
- Overview of Aquifer Recharge Projects
- Discuss Constituents Briefings

### Goals and Objectives of the Plan

Gina Bartlett introduced a group brainstorm exercise to develop goals and objectives of the GMP. The panel was informed that this would be the start of a process to reach consensus. Participants worked in rotating groups, followed by discussion of ideas put forth in plenary. The panel highlighted several overarching goals and objectives for the GMP.

- Manage and maintain groundwater to support all beneficial uses
- Promote sustainability at all levels
  - o Ecosystems and species
  - o Human systems
  - o Water supply reliability
  - o Consideration of economic opportunities and constraints
- Foster protection and improvement where appropriate:
  - o Groundwater quality
  - o Recharge areas
  - o Subsidence
  - o Adverse environmental impacts

- o Interactions between groundwater and surface water
- Ensure community involvement in the planning process and final acceptance of plan
- Share management responsibilities equitably between urban and rural water users
- Enhance science-based decision-making and policy; monitor and collect data on a consistent basis
- Educate the public on water management issues
- Promote energy efficient management of water supply and infrastructure
- Maintain local control of groundwater management

There is no priority or logical sequence to these goals and objectives. A full list of items discussed is included as Appendix 1. Gina Bartlett pointed out many common threads to the issues discussed during the December meeting. The project team will utilize these initial results to craft a straw proposal for revision and refinement at future meetings. The Panel will also revisit its goals and objectives toward the end of the process to ensure that they reflect the insights gained through developing the groundwater management plan.

## **Plan Boundary**

The panel re-visited the issue of boundary considerations for the groundwater management planning effort. Facilitator Gina Bartlett reminded the panel how it leaned towards the watershed for the groundwater management plan boundary at the last meeting. Tim Parker presented a USGS map; the study defines the boundary as the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed. One person expressed surprise that the Myacamas Mountains were included in the watershed. Another questioned the watershed boundary at Windsor. Several participants confirmed that rainwater does indeed come into the basin from these areas. Mr. Parker commented on a series of questions relative to additional management considerations, groundwater treatment, science integration, and collaboration with other regional groundwater management plans. Gina Bartlett summarized commentary and pointed out that the participants appeared to favor inclusion of the watershed boundary. No participants expressed lingering doubts and thus it was confirmed that the plan would include this boundary.

## **Legal Framework**

The next agenda item involved discussion and potential decision-making by the panel on the legal framework of the GMP. At the last meeting, the Panel expressed interest in the AB 3030 plan, particularly due to a structure that is voluntary, non-regulatory, enhances funding opportunities and allows for local control. Participants are free to choose a legal framework for the plan. A number of issues and concerns were raised about AB 3030.

## **Issues of Concern**

A few participants expressed concerns and questions about AB 3030. One particular concern focused on centralization of power at the water agency should it be chosen as the lead agency for the GMP. In addition, some participants worried that the agency could raise water usage fees. Facilitator Gina Bartlett reiterated how the panel is charged with defining the management plan and structure and suggested fees are an example of an issue that would have to be approved by the panel. After an inquiry, each city representative expressed support for the Sonoma County Water Agency serving as the lead agency under an AB 3030 plan. One participant noted that an AB 3030 plan does not cede power. There is instead a coordinating agency that can provide needed infrastructure, help move the process along and would take its direction from the panel. Jay Jasperse commented that the water agency is not seeking regulatory control. His agency's role is to coordinate, facilitate and connect with state and federal agencies to acquire resources that support the plan.

A number of participants agreed that it could be helpful to bring in AB 3030 experts or present case study examples to the panel. Tim Parker provided clarifying remarks on AB 3030 as a legal framework. He pointed out that the lead agency under this framework is required to develop the scope, schedule and budget. He suggested that any proposed fee increase may require a majority vote of the public on a proposition. Gina Bartlett reminded everyone that Mr. Parker is a great resource available to the group.

On a separate but related issue, one participant raised the issue of adjudication. Tim Parker briefly reviewed some pros and cons to adjudication. Many participants made various comments suggesting that adjudication would work against the stated purpose of the panel. Gina Bartlett revisited the "stand aside" clause in the charter, which enables a participant to disagree with a vote taken by the group while not preventing consensus. The participant with interest in adjudication agreed to look at this section of the charter, and later confirmed this provision.

Gina Bartlett asked if all concerns about AB 3030 had been addressed. Many expressed interest to memorialize the issues of concern in written form versus just a verbal agreement. Someone suggested that the group could consider a package agreement that writes up these issues since some still expressed reluctance about AB 3030 in isolation of these other considerations. Therefore a final decision on the legal framework was not made. It was instead suggested that a subcommittee could be formed to further explore the AB 3030 option and the "package proposal" report back to the panel.

## **Living in Two Worlds**

Facilitator Gina Bartlett distributed a handout entitled *Living in Two Worlds*. She pointed out that individuals and organizations are going to pursue their own interests outside the work of the panel. Ms Bartlett highlighted key elements of the document and requested that, to the degree possible, participants share their actions with the panel.

Towards the end of the discussion on the legal framework of the GMP, one participant suggested that the panel could write a letter expressing concerns about the tribal casino development. In response, several participants pointed out that this would fall outside the scope and purpose of the panel.

### **Technical Advisory Committee**

Due to the extended and ongoing discussion regarding the legal framework for the GMP, it was noted that the Technical Advisory Committee would not start in May as previously envisioned.

### **Modeling Scenarios**

The extended legal framework discussion also prevented the inclusion of modeling scenarios at the April 12 meeting. This agenda item will be moved to the next meeting.